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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 000563

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/IPA AND EUR/AGS - VIKMANIS-KELLER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2016

TAGS: PREL KPAL AU

SUBJECT: MESSAGE ON HOST COUNTRY MEETINGS WITH HAMAS

DELIVERED TO AUSTRIA

REF: STATE 27174

Classified By: Economic-Political Counselor Gregory E. Phillips. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) EconPolCouns delivered reftel message on February 21 to Klaus Famira, acting European Correspondent in the Austrian Foreign Ministry, and on February 23 to Ralph Scheide, the head of the Austrian MFA's Middle East and Africa Section.

¶2. (C) CODEL Wexler raised the Hamas issue with Scheide during a February 23 meeting. Scheide stressed that Austria's position toward Hamas was clear. Austria and followed the agreed U.S.-EU stance that Hamas had to accede to the three guiding principles of recognizing Israel's right to exist, disarming and renouncing violence, and meeting the Palestinian Authority's previous commitments, including the Roadmap. Scheide said it would be important key now to support Mahmoud Abbas, who had as much of a popular mandate as Hamas. Specifically, we need to help him take care of humanitarian needs. In general, Scheide said, Austria and the EU had to coordinate its position closely with the U.S. in responding to Hamas.

McCaw